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ABSTRACT

This book offers guidance for persons interested in planning an intergenerational school partnership program. Intergenerational partnership programs are designed to bring generations together in the school setting, through activities and experiences that benefit everyone involved. They encourage older persons from the community to volunteer to help students. The booklet presents a 12-step program planning and implementation process developed by the National Association of Partners in Education. The 12 steps are as follows: (1) awareness; (2) needs assessment; (3) goals and objectives; (4) potential resources; (5) program design; (6) recruitment; (7) orientation; (8) assignment; (9) training; (10) retention; (11) recognition; and (12) monitoring and evaluation. The guide also contains an annotated list of six resources available from the American Association of Retired Persons, the National Association of Partners in Education, and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. (KC)

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becoming a school partner

ED 413 483

# A GUIDEBOOK FOR ORGANIZING INTERGENERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS IN SCHOOLS

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# becoming a school partner

## A GUIDEBOOK FOR ORGANIZING INTERGENERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS IN SCHOOLS

A JOINT PROJECT OF
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF RETIRED PERSONS
AND THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

AARP

NAPE

This guidebook was developed as a joint project by the American Association of Retired Persons and the National Association of Partners in Education. A companion video, entitled *"Becoming a School Partner"*, is available from AARP for sale or loan and is designed to educate viewers about the value of involving older volunteers in the schools.

AARP is the nation's leading organization for people age 50 and over. It serves their needs and interests through legislative advocacy, research, informative programs and community services provided by a network of local chapters and experienced volunteers throughout the country.

The National Association of Partners in Education (NAPE) is the only national organization devoted solely to the mission of enhancing and expanding educational partnerships in American schools. NAPE is a membership organization representing the many schools, businesses, community groups, educators and individuals who work together as partners to enhance the education of children.

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# FOREWORD

America is facing a crisis in education. Schools cannot work alone to meet the needs of children and youth. We must assume a shared approach to education, in which parents and other citizens, government, business groups, and foundations pitch in to help the schools nurture, educate, and inspire students.

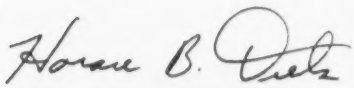
Today, AARP's vision statement is "Bringing lifetimes of experience and leadership to serve all generations." Few activities better symbolize this vision than the partnerships that volunteers are forging with schools across the country to help America's students become more knowledgeable citizens, skilled workers and contributing members of society. Millions of volunteers, many of them older persons, are donating their time and talents to thousands of schools through volunteer programs organized by school districts, local governments, businesses, and community groups.

Most school systems need volunteers; older persons have the experience, patience, skill, and time to offer. As volunteers, they can meet many needs. What is needed are more programs that effectively involve older volunteers in the schools.

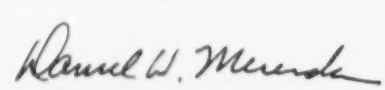
This guidebook is meant to offer guidance for those interested in planning an intergenerational school partnership program. It is not our purpose to provide a complete planning tool but, rather, to help you ask the right questions in moving forward with your ideas.

It is our hope that this guide will help support and encourage the development of new intergenerational partnerships across the country which bring the generations together for mutually beneficial exchanges.

AARP and NAPE invite you to pledge your commitment to the next generation. We urge you to help our children and the schools by exploring the possibility of starting an intergenerational school partnership.



Horace B. Deets
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AARP



Daniel W. Merenda
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NAPE

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## Making a Difference

America's schools are showing a new face to the community these days. All across the nation, increasing numbers of schools are welcoming people from the community in through the school doors to build partnerships in education.

These partnerships can reward us all, especially when we work to build a future that is linked to the past. Bringing young and old together in an intergenerational partnership provides this link.

Intergenerational partnership programs are designed to bring generations together in the school setting, through activities and experiences that benefit everyone involved. They encourage older persons from the community to volunteer to help students.

Older volunteers may participate daily or weekly, to support individual students or small groups of students. Or the volunteers might participate less often during the school year—as role models or to provide information about careers, hobbies, travel, or other special interests.

Older volunteers bring lifetimes of experience, skills, and understanding to their roles as school volunteers. They contribute valuable assistance through reading and listening, tutoring, mentoring, helping students and teachers with various projects and activities. In addition to contributing to students' academic achievement, older volunteers provide emotional support while also helping students understand more about aging. In our mobile society, we have lost our extended families and older volunteers often serve as a grandparent figure for many children.

Older volunteers have shown they have a strong commitment to their roles in the schools. They are motivated to become part of the corps of school volunteers because they want to be useful and productive; they are looking for meaningful, new roles; they care deeply about children; they are concerned about education; and they would like to contribute to both children's education and their emotional well-being.

> ***"Older volunteers coming into the schools make such a difference—they bring so much life experience. What they offer the children is priceless—a lasting legacy passed on to the next generation."***

The involvement of older volunteers in school partnerships across the country has been invaluable, as one coordinator of a successful partnership program tells us in the above quote.

While volunteers of all ages have been active in the school system for decades, intergenerational programs now are recognized as being a timely and much needed resource that adds to the volunteer work force.

## Involving Older Volunteers

There are many ways to involve older volunteers in the school setting and to make them important members of the intergenerational partnership.

Many people, including parents, teachers, administrators, and school board members, are interested in having older volunteers in schools. AARP chapter and Retired Teachers Association unit leaders might be interested in starting a partnership, even if only on a small scale. In addition, school volunteer coordinators might want to incorporate older volunteers into existing school volunteer programs.

While the easiest way to involve older volunteers in the schools would be through a school volunteer coordinator, many schools and school systems do not have such a staff person. AARP chapters, Retired Teachers Association units, RSVP, and other groups of older persons can initiate contact with their local schools expressing their interest in starting a partnership. Sometimes, the intergenerational partnership forms the basis for building a strong volunteer program which draws people from many populations, such as parents, college and high school students, the military, business, local government, and the community in general.

Whether the intergenerational partnership is to operate independently or will be a part of a larger school volunteer program, you can use this guide to build a new program or strengthen a program that is already in progress.

## Developing an Intergenerational Program

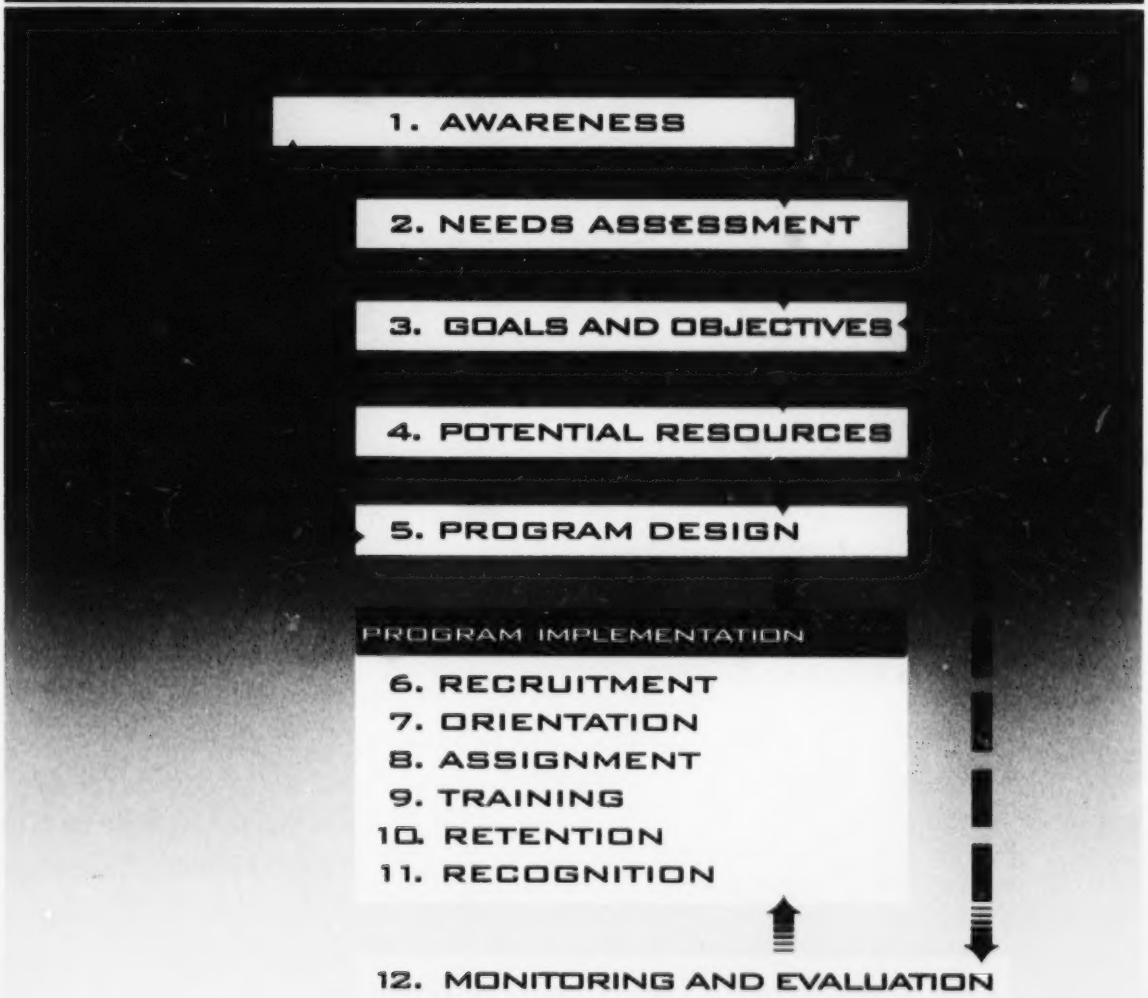
The success of intergenerational partnership programs depends on the amount of planning and preparation that goes into the developmental stages. When the school system is prepared for the involvement of older people in volunteer activities, the partnership program has a much greater chance for success.

This guide leads you through a 12-step process, developed by the National Association of Partners in Education, for developing a successful intergenerational partnership program. These steps represent a "tried and true" process that has been used in developing numerous partnership programs.

Lessons can be learned from those who have worked with and participated in intergenerational programs. Some of these experiences are described for you in the discussion of each of the 12 steps. This guide helps you consider the needs of

all participants in the program the student, the teacher, the school, the community, and the older volunteer. A list of additional resources to enhance your program is provided at the end of this manual.

## The NAPE 12-Step Process of Program Development



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***The first five steps** discussed in this guide lead you through the process of preparing for a new intergenerational school partnership program or reviewing the stability of a current program. As you think through each of these steps, you will begin to see the support and resources that are necessary in order for you to start your program and make it as strong as possible.*

## Awareness

Creating awareness about what you are doing can be the most important step in developing your intergenerational program and possibly the most challenging. This means that you need to guarantee a warm welcome for the partnership by letting people know about the program and including them in planning for it.

You will need the support and interest of both the school community and the neighborhood community. As you think about how to *"sell"* your program to key individuals and groups, you also will begin to identify some of the problems that might be ahead of you.

During this phase of creating awareness, you will need to work hard at persuading others about the value and potential of intergenerational partnerships. Awareness will be an ongoing activity. You must build and maintain support as long as the program operates. Remember that *communication* is a valuable tool in keeping people involved in the program's planning and aware of its progress, and this tool will help you solve problems as they arise.

As you plan your strategy for creating community awareness, consider how the following might affect your program:

- school policies
- important community issues related to education
- the response you might get from key people in the school setting and community
- sources of older volunteers
- the message you want to convey about the program
- and, most importantly, the role this program will play in meeting the needs of the school.

Support for the intergenerational program must come from all levels. Remember that programs need "top-level" support in order to be successful. Work hard to get public and written support and approval from people and groups who can make a difference—like the school board, superintendent, and older volunteer groups. Choose carefully the people you want to contact, as well as when and how to approach them.

Some you will want to consider contacting include:

- school board members
- district administrators
- principals
- teachers, teachers' unions, and school support staff
- parents
- students
- older volunteer groups, like Retired Senior Volunteer Programs, AARP chapters and retired teachers groups
- local Office on Aging
- Volunteer Bureau/ Clearinghouse

Getting key people involved from the beginning by asking for their ideas and support gives them ownership in the program and they will work harder to make it successful.

## Needs Assessment

Creating an effective intergenerational program requires a clear understanding of how the identified needs of all participants can be met through volunteer activities. This means that you must continually gather information that will assist you in matching volunteer activities with school needs.

Needs assessments provide important information for the program on:

1) the primary needs of the school system or individual schools with which you want to work

2) needs of older persons who are potential volunteers

3) the ability of older volunteers to help meet those needs.

A *needs assessment* can identify ways in which older volunteers can work with teachers and students in order to create a better educational system. At the

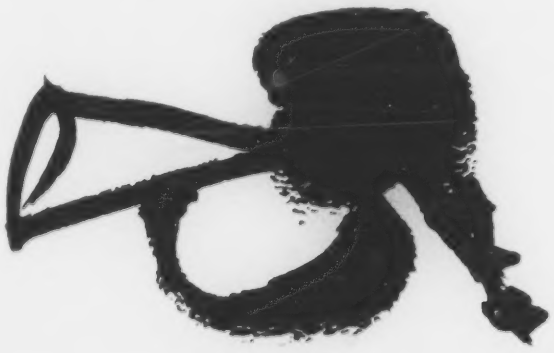
same time, this assessment helps students, teachers, administrators, parents, and older volunteers feel more involved in your partnership program because they have an opportunity to participate in the planning process.

Teachers and administrators can provide a great deal of information that will help guide the development of the program. This might relate to:

- the needs that can be met by an older volunteer
- the benefits to schools from the involvement of older adults
- the most suitable roles for older volunteers in the classroom
- concerns they or their students might have about older people as volunteers
- the level of support they can provide to the intergenerational partnership program and the older volunteers in the classroom.

Groups representing older volunteers might offer additional information like:

- identified needs of older persons that can be satisfied through the intergenerational program
- skills older volunteers have that could be useful in the schools
- availability of older volunteers
- activities older volunteers might want to do
- concerns older volunteers might have about going into the schools.



As you build an intergenerational program, you can use several methods for identifying these needs: surveys, interviews, observation, and review of school records. Once you understand the needs that exist, you will have the right information to recruit and assign older volunteers to positions where they can be most effective. The information you gain through the needs assessment also helps as you write detailed job descriptions for your volunteers so that they have clear instructions on what is expected of them.

The following worksheet might help you in assessing needs.

## Needs Assessment Worksheet

| KEY POPULATION | ASSESSMENT METHOD | DATE | QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED | PERSON RESPONSIBLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

## Goals and Objectives

Often in program development, we have difficulty understanding the difference between goals and objectives. Without clear statements of the program's goals and objectives, however, it is difficult to implement and manage an organized, effective volunteer system.

A *goal* is a broad statement of purpose that guides the program's growth and development. The program goals should match the school's goals. For example, a school's goals might read "to improve academic achievement of all students," or "to encourage students to remain in school through high school graduation." These goals grow out of the philosophy and values of the school and the community. You can see how your intergenerational program can work towards these same goals.

An *objective* is a much more specific statement of what the program should accomplish. Statements of objectives include precise information on **who**, **what**, and **when**. For instance, one objective for the program might be: "to assign 10 older volunteers as tutors in elementary school English classes by a specific date." This objective is precise, measurable, and supports a school goal suggested above—improvement of academic achievement. Another objective might be: "to assign 10 older mentors to high school students at risk of dropping out in the course of a year."

One of the most helpful ways to tell the difference between goals and objectives is in the role they play in measurement and evaluation. The goal statement is not intended to be measurable. Evaluation is based, instead, on the more specific and detailed objectives that include measurable information.

Keep in mind that the intergenerational program is a partnership! Success happens when the intergenerational partnership program supports the school's goals and also meets the needs of the older volunteers.

Use the following Goals Worksheet in developing your goals, objectives and activities to meet the objectives. This worksheet will eventually become a work plan from which you can monitor progress.

# Goals Worksheet

**PRIORITY NEEDS (LIST)**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**GOALS STATEMENT (LIST)**

1.

2.

3.

**OBJECTIVES (WHO, WHAT, WHEN)**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES TO CARRY OUT OBJECTIVES**

18

## Potential Resources

A volunteer program can survive and meet its objectives only when it has the necessary; *people, materials, and funding*. Each program or volunteer activity might require a different set of resources. You should think carefully about the resources you need before you begin recruiting volunteer participants for your program.

You will find potential resources in the schools (staff, PTA, Booster Clubs, advisory councils), the school system, and the older adult community. One task is to identify places where you can find older adults who will serve as volunteers. You will need to work with these sources community groups, churches, seniors centers, older volunteer programs, such as AARP chapters, Retired Teachers Association units, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Foster Grandparents, and so on so that they are ready to hear more about your program and offer support and participation.

Material resources are needed for the program, too. There are many operational expenses and supplies, some of which the school might contribute. Plan for the program needs—

- money
- office space
- printing
- postage
- telephones
- computers
- travel expenses

Look to the community for some of your resources. Remember that you don't need to concentrate only on fund raising to find program supplies. Many organizations and people are willing to provide these.

For instance, newspaper companies might assist with printing; grocery stores can donate food; hotels often have food for meetings; and local foundations are in the business of providing grants.

Identifying potential resources in advance means less frustration as you work to meet program objectives. Plan a strategy for matching activities with resources. Use the form on page 18 to help you think through the details.

## Program Design

Designing an intergenerational partnership program requires an understanding of the day-to-day operation and administration of the program. This is true whether you are bringing older volunteers into existing school volunteer programs or whether you are an AARP chapter or some other local group starting a project.

Several things must be in place before you can have an effective program design: official approval from the school board or local school with which you will work, cooperation from the school(s) and the older volunteer groups involved, and a clear match between the program goals and the school district's goals. Activities can then be chosen that will ensure that the objectives are met.

# Potential Resources

| PROGRAM OBJECTIVE OR ACTIVITY | POTENTIAL RESOURCES | CONTACT PERSON & ADDRESS | DATE NEEDED |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
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## ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES

The procedures for running the intergenerational partnership program and its activities must be identified and approved. Many staffing questions will arise in relation to support staff, advisory committees, requests for volunteers from teachers, record keeping, orientation, and training. Other issues that need to be considered might relate to health and legal procedures (such as: will the volunteers need a physical exam by a doctor prior to working with children), liability insurance, parking, transportation, food facilities, reporting of absences, maintenance of information files, confidentiality, and work space. School administrators will need to respond to some of these issues and provide you with appropriate information.

## ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

All program participants—including older volunteers, teachers, school administrators, or volunteer coordinators must have a clear understanding of their role and expectations. The rules and policies that all must recognize ultimate responsibility of teachers for their classes, supervisory relationships, authority, and confidentiality must be clearly spelled out.

Older volunteers work best when they are given good guidance and a clear understanding of their role. In designing a volunteer job description, be sure to include a position title, the purpose of this volunteer role, volunteer responsibilities, and a time frame. Also consider the credentials an older volunteer will need for the position, the teacher or staff involved, and the benefits the volunteer might realize from this role.

## PROGRAM MODELS

Other successful intergenerational older volunteer programs provide models for program design and operation. The best programs using older volunteers in the schools started small and grew with their success. Design a program with realistic goals and plan for results you think can be achieved. You may want to collect additional information about other programs that have been successful in order to learn about their length of operation, program goals, costs, operation, evaluation, and budget.

## PROGRAM BUDGET

Effective volunteer programs do not operate without costs. Program budgets are essential to keep the program operating smoothly. Some items to consider are—

- personnel
- transportation and travel
- telephone
- recognition activities *(coffees, luncheons, etc.)*
- publicity *(brochures, posters, school newsletters)*
- postage
- office space
- program materials and handbooks

Try to plan for these costs by developing a clear and realistic budget.

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The following sections deal with program implementation. This is the point at which the relationships and understandings that have been developed are turned into "hands-on" realities.

- Recruitment
- Orientation
- Assignment
- Training
- Retention
- Recognition
- Evaluation

***Although the steps described in the previous pages are thought of as developmental stages, an effective coordinator must continue to review and revise the relevant program elements. One of the most important parts of the coordinator's position is the continual self-assessment of the program's process and progress.***

***Transportation is critical. When people are willing to volunteer but don't have a way to get to the school, you will have to find ways to help them—either send something home for them to do, arrange for transportation, or get another volunteer to pick them up.***

## Recruitment

When each step of the development process has been addressed, the following steps become less complicated. Recruitment is easier when an effective needs assessment is complete and when detailed job descriptions have been written.

There are general guidelines for recruitment—

- recruiting is a year-round responsibility
- recruit for available positions
- start small and work out the problems with a manageable core of flexible volunteers
- find the older volunteers who have the skills you need and speak to them individually
- be as clear and detailed as possible about your program and the older volunteers' responsibilities
- provide room in your program for volunteers to grow and try new opportunities
- if recruiting is unsuccessful, reassess your program
- *the best recruiter is an enthusiastic older school volunteer, student, or a teacher who has worked with older volunteers.*

Sometimes you will learn from other programs about special considerations, like transportation, in recruiting older volunteers.

RECRUITING TEACHERS

Recruitment activities also must target the teachers who might be willing to involve older adults in their classroom. Active recruitment efforts require ongoing attention to the teachers' needs, interest, and openness in identifying viable roles for older volunteers.

A special recruitment meeting should be held to discuss program goals, data on the value of intergenerational volunteer programs, teachers' needs and concerns and volunteer role descriptions. Recruitment of older volunteers, the amount of teacher time that will be required, how to plan useful volunteer roles, and concerns about integrating older volunteers with students and school staff should also be discussed.

RECRUITING OLDER VOLUNTEERS

Since many older people might not have obvious connections for being involved in the school community, you will need to state clearly the benefits of their participation, including:

- friendships with students, staff and other volunteers
- feelings of achievement
- belonging and membership
- increased self esteem and personal growth
- training
- challenge
- recognition for contrabutions to schools and education
- opportunities to socialize with older volunteers.

Also important here are the characteristics of the older volunteers you would like in your program. Consider these recruitment issues:

- the minimum age of volunteers (some programs start at 50, others start at 60 or 65)
- the best times to hold recruitment sessions
- school location and transportation needs of older volunteers
- the need to recruit volunteers with special skills
- the benefits of finding older volunteers with different ethnic, professional, and socio-economic backgrounds.

As you try to encourage older people to volunteer in your program, remember this advice from a successful coordinator of an intergenerational partnership program:

***It has been many years since they have been in schools and around children but once they participate in volunteer work, they enjoy it. This is why it is important to bring older volunteers along to explain their roles. Also, showing videos with volunteers working one-on one with children in the schools is effective. If volunteers are uncomfortable, pair them two-to-one (such as a husband and wife team or a couple of friends working with a student).***

RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

Try different ways of finding older volunteers for your program. Here are a few suggestions:

- deliver presentations to groups of older persons
- prepare press releases about intergenerational programs
- submit articles about successful volunteers to local papers
- invite older volunteers to attend school events
- sponsor neighborhood and grandparent days
- arrange appearances by older volunteers on radio and television shows
- prepare advertisements on older volunteer training
- share information with other voluntary agencies
- recruit from business and government, particularly corporate retiree programs or pre-retirement programs.

After successful recruiting, follow up quickly on your commitments and schedule dates for interviews, orientation, and placement. By maintaining a schedule, you can keep volunteers interested and active. Remember to continue your process of self-assessment by adjusting your recruitment strategies so that you continue successful campaigns or identify and discard techniques that do not bring volunteers into the program.

## Orientation

For most older volunteers, the orientation session is a first impression. It also can be a lasting impression. Greeting the new volunteers warmly and "showing them the ropes" helps them feel needed and wanted. They will learn how they will work with paid staff, what information is confidential, the importance of following scheduled times and responsibilities, and the goals of the school and the volunteer program.

Orientation acquaints the older volunteers with the school and clarifies the purpose of school volunteering. It also allows volunteers to express their concerns and look forward to their participation in the intergenerational partnership program.

Consider the information volunteers need to hear at the orientation session. It usually helps to plan a simple and short activity that allows everyone to become acquainted with each other. Volunteers might want to hear how your program got started, as well as how the program

is organized and what rules and procedures they must know. They also need to understand the school setting where they will be working.

Most of all, communicate the message that ***volunteering is worthwhile, satisfying, and fun!***

Although orientation sessions might vary, some general guidelines are worth noting:

- give volunteers information about parking and location prior to the meeting
- have school administrators on hand to provide a personal welcome
- include teachers in the orientation
- allow time for questions from volunteers
- have name tags prepared for all participants and extras for friends who come along
- include a few experienced older volunteers in the session
- keep the session to two hours and schedule more than one session if volunteers have time conflicts.

Teachers, too, require an orientation to the intergenerational partnership program. They must understand their own responsibilities and what they can expect from the intergenerational partnership program.

## Assignment

Older volunteers need assignments that match their skills with appropriate activities listed in teacher and school-site requests. When volunteers have been successfully matched with the needs of students and teachers, the volunteer experience becomes much more satisfying.

The process of matching an older volunteer with the right assignment can happen several ways. Interviews with the potential volunteers can be compared with either written or verbal requests from teachers. Other matches arise when volunteers and teachers have the opportunity to meet and talk at orientation and training sessions. One important rule in matching is to keep in mind the grade level that will be most comfortable for the volunteer and in which the older volunteer will be most effective.

*The list of school volunteer opportunities is endless. It is limited only by the needs of the children and the interests of the volunteer.*

Volunteers in successful intergenerational programs have been involved in many different roles:

- tutors
- enrichment instructors
- classroom aides
- library assistants
- reading assistants
- mentors
- special friends to children
- career/college counselors
- field trip chaperones
- office assistants
- playground/lunchroom assistants
- group participants in developing instructional materials
- resource speakers
- special projects
- living history
- and many others.

## GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWING

Develop a guide for interviewing potential volunteers. Be sure to get the information you need. At the same time, you can give prospective volunteers information about school needs, volunteer roles, and training procedures.

During the interview process, you will find many indications of the applicant's potential as a volunteer in your program, including:

- attitudes toward volunteerism and reasons for volunteering
- expectations of volunteer work
- special interests and skills
- ability to communicate and relate
- personal history and educational experience
- time and days available
- concerns related to volunteering in the schools.

## PLACEMENT

Although we would like to be able to involve as many older volunteers as possible in our programs, not everyone can be matched immediately. In order to keep a person interested, let them know right away what is (or is not) available and ask to keep their name on file for future reference. At times, it is necessary to make decisions about applicants who are not suitable for the program. In cases where someone is not suitable, the individual should be notified immediately that there is not an appropriate opening in the program at this time.

When a volunteer does match a teacher's request, inform the volunteer immediately and arrange the necessary contacts with the teacher. Provide any necessary training.

## Training

Program participants should receive the necessary preparation to help them perform their assignments. Older volunteers may need *training* in teaching methods and skills that can make them more effective in their work. Teachers need the chance to explore their own attitudes about aging and to think about the potential for positive intergenerational learning experiences in their classes.

TRAINING FOR OLDER VOLUNTEERS

Training for older volunteers increases motivation and shows the volunteers that they are important members of the partnership. Many volunteers in intergenerational programs regard *lifelong learning* as a very real benefit from their involvement in the partnership program.

Training sessions provide time for older volunteers to share personal and professional experiences and learn new skills. In one very successful intergenerational program, the coordinator reports that,

*The older volunteers in our program want more events. Not events like recognition or awards, but events where they can get together as a group and discuss their current volunteer duties and learn new skills.*

Experiences shared by other intergenerational partnership programs suggest several areas where training is helpful:

- tutoring techniques in basic math and reading
- introduction to special education programs
- introduction to programs for gifted students
- working with students learning English as a second language
- child/adolescent behavioral development
- the role of discipline in the schools
- the function of the intergenerational partnership program within the school district.

***The older volunteers in our program want more events. Not events like recognition or awards, but events where they can get together as a group and discuss their current volunteer duties and learn new skills.***

TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

Just as in most of the steps of program development, remember that teachers also need some of your attention. Through training, teachers hear more about the older volunteers and about the teacher's role in the program. You might need to address some of the stereotypes of aging and provide information to the teachers about the physical, emotional, and social needs of older adults. For instance, although teachers might feel that the older volunteers will be more physically vulnerable, one successful program coordinator is quick to respond that,

*There have been no accidents in this program in the 15 years of my involvement here.*

You may want to use the following worksheet to define training needs, target audiences and how the training will be conducted.

## Training Worksheet

| NEED | TRAINING OBJECTIVES | TRAINING METHODS | MATERIALS & FACILITIES | FACULTY/ TRAINERS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

## Retention

Building a strong intergenerational partnership program requires a continuing commitment to program maintenance. Keeping the older volunteers active and satisfied is an important part of this maintenance. Effective assignment and recognition efforts go a long way toward retaining your volunteers.

You have put a great deal of time and effort into the partnership and you will want to keep all of your volunteers satisfied with their involvement. Older volunteers who are happy with their work are the best advertisement for your program. They become some of the most effective recruitment tools available.

One of the biggest mistakes that is made in volunteer programs is to assume that because volunteers are not paid, they are free. You must make an investment in keeping your volunteers through a year-long commitment. This investment might be found in varying rewards and benefits—

- ongoing training for older volunteers that aids in their self-improvement
- procedures for giving credit to volunteers for their work, based on accurate and detailed program records
- documentation of the value of the older volunteers' work, and information on the impact they have had within the school system
- emphasis on training teachers to work with older volunteers
- opportunities to get together and share experiences
- recognition events.

*The Senior Stars Club provides special benefits library privileges, a free lunch when volunteering all day, school bus transportation (if available) when volunteering all day, three admissions to sports events per year - these are included on their club card and punched as they are redeemed.*

At the same time, be aware of day-to-day happenings. Any conflicts or reservations that you might sense from teachers or students will be felt by the volunteers. Work closely with teachers and administrators to reinforce the benefits of older volunteer participation in the schools.

**Recognition**

One of the most critical aspects of developing a strong volunteer program is to recognize the importance of these volunteers—both in private and in public.

There are many rewards for an older volunteer in the intergenerational partnership program. The pleasure of being involved with children, as well as building new friendships, falls among these benefits. However, you must not underestimate the sheer power of expressing appreciation to older volunteers and letting them know that they are important and special partners in the education process.

One successful intergenerational partnership program has a special club for their volunteers.

Older volunteer recognition can be expressed in many enjoyable and valuable ways.

- volunteer recognition at a luncheon, tea, or special gathering where volunteers receive small gifts or corsages
- a breakfast at the beginning of the year with the superintendent or principal welcoming older volunteers and making them feel part of the team
- letters of thanks, birthday cards, or get well cards from the children; this is a powerful form of recognition and one that many coordinators mention as a meaningful tribute
- a school or volunteer program newsletter, and regular communication with the volunteers
- certificates of service at the end of the year for all volunteers and special awards for outstanding volunteers
- invitations to attend school assemblies
- complimentary tickets to school theatrical productions and sports events this also gives students an enthusiastic audience
- paid attendance at volunteer-related meetingsand conferences
- messages of appreciation displayed in the school using bulletin boards, balloons, murals, banners, flags, children's art, and a list of volunteers by name and class assignment displayed in the hall or entry area.

Use the following worksheet as you begin to think of ways you could recognize the older volunteers in your program.

## Recognition Worksheet

| IDENTIFY AT LEAST THREE TECHNIQUES FOR RECOGNIZING OLDER VOLUNTEERS |
| --- |
| |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |
| 6. |

Develop a strategy for recognizing your older volunteers.

## Recognition Plan

| DATE | PERSON RESPONSIBLE | POPULATION TO BE RECOGNIZED | RECOGNITION ACTIVITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

## Evaluation

Well-planned evaluations provide measures of ongoing effectiveness. The collection and interpretation of data helps you see the accomplishments, strengths, and weaknesses of your program. This can relate to the effectiveness of the program as a whole, or of specific program components.

The measurable objectives created for the program will determine the type of information that you need to collect. Data come from ongoing program monitoring and is used in annual reporting.

Program evaluation is useful for many reasons:

- to justify refunding
- to get continued support for all aspects of the program
- to show effectiveness of all or parts of your program
- to improve services
- to help in future planning for programs and activities
- to expand community support for the program.

The most effective evaluations are those planned before the program even begins. Program design should reflect the evaluation needs for ongoing measures of effectiveness. Once objectives are set, it is possible to begin collecting and recording baseline data.

DATA NEEDED

- demographic data
- activity data
- program process data
- program outcome data.

METHODS FOR COLLECTION

- application form/entry questionnaire
- initial interviews
- sign-in/out sheets
- follow-up interviews
- evaluation forms
- end-of-year questionnaires
- attitude surveys.

REPORTING EVALUATION

A thorough evaluation will enable you to report on program progress toward the stated objectives. Many people will be interested in what is happening with the program, so share information in a clear and concise report. Some of the people you will need to up-date might include:

- teachers
- principals
- board of education
- superintendent of schools
- older volunteers
- program staff
- parent organization
- Office on Aging staff.

Use this worksheet to plan your evaluation strategy.

## Evaluation Plan

| DATE | INFORMATION TO BE COLLECTED | FROM WHOM | METHOD OF COLLECTING INFO. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

All of the 12 steps that have been presented in this manual represent a process that has been used effectively in planning and implementing many successful intergenerational partnership programs. An effective program coordinator will consider each of these steps and use them in an ongoing system of assessment and improvement.

You will find that many of the steps overlap in your program development. More importantly, each step is important to the next, with positive impact on the program when given the right attention.

The reward of all of this work is a healthy and thriving partnership that enriches the educational experience for many students and the lives of older volunteers.

# RESOURCES

### Becoming a School Partner: A Video

This videotape program is intended to illustrate the benefits of involving older volunteers in the schools and how such involvement can benefit the schools, the teachers, the students, and the volunteers.

COST $20.00
CONTACT AARP A/V Programs
Program Resources
Department (B4)
PO Box 51040
Station R
Washington, DC 20091
(Stock #D14864)

Resources from NAPE

### How to Organize and Manage Intergenerational Partnership Programs

This is an extensive manual designed to take school systems through systematic procedures that will result in the creation of successful intergenerational school partnerships. It is intended to be used by school personnel who are responsible for the development and maintenance of partnership programs, but could also be used by others who want to adopt a systematic planning process in doing intergenerational programming. Many useful appendices are included.

COST $50.00
FROM National Assoc. of Partners in Education
209 Madison Street
Suite 401
Alexandria, VA 22314

Resources from AARP

### Becoming A School Partner: A Guide for Older Volunteers

This guide is designed specifically for older persons, to encourage them to become school volunteers. The booklet describes the challenges facing schools, the variety of opportunities for school volunteering and how to become a school volunteer. It has proven effective as a recruitment tool by many school districts across the country.

COST Single copies are free; $13.50 per package of 50.
(Stock # D13527)

### Older Volunteers: A Valuable Resource

A guide for public and private agencies on how to integrate volunteers with paid staff.

COST Single copies are free; $11.50 per package of 50.
(Stock # D12025)

### Learning: An Intergenerational Experience

AARP poster which celebrates Older Americans Month 1992. Colorful intergenerational photo and useful slogan make it appropriate for use in schools.

COST Single copies free.
(Stock # D14684)
WRITE TO AARP Fulfillment
601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049

National Organization

The following national organization also promotes and sponsors intergenerational school volunteering in communities around the country.

**Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), ACTION**
1100 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20525
(202) 606-4835

Nearly 400,000 older Americans are involved in RSVP's 750 community volunteer projects across the U.S. sponsored by a variety of local and county government agencies, colleges, religious organizations, charities and service groups.

Your local Retired Senior Volunteer Program should be listed in your telephone book. General information about RSVP is available from the program's Washington, DC office.

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MN 60919 copy 2
340.540:A/2
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